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Nick Land

Nick Land (born 14 March 1962) is an English philosopher who has been described as "the Godfather of accelerationism".[2] His work has been tied to the development of speculative realism,[3][4] and departs from the formal conventions of academic writing, incorporating unorthodox and esoteric influences.[5] Much of his writing was anthologized in the 2011 collection *Fanged Noumena*.

Nick Land	
Born	14 March 1962
Nationality	British
Era	Contemporary philosophy
Region	Western philosophy
School	Continental philosophy[1] Accelerationism Dark Enlightenment
Institutions	University of Warwick
Main interests	Acceleration · nihilism · materialism · cybernetics · antihumanism · cyberpunk · horror
Notable ideas	Accelerationism

In the 1990s, Land was closely affiliated with the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU), a "theory-fiction" collective co-founded by Land and cyberfeminist philosopher Sadie Plant at the University of Warwick.[6][7] During this era, Land drew inspiration from post-structuralist theory and leftist thinkers such as Bataille, Marx, and Deleuze & Guattari as well as science fiction, rave culture, and the occult.[8] He also coined the term "hyperstition" to refer to memetic ideas which bring about their own reality.

Land resigned from Warwick in 1998. Following a period of amphetamine abuse, he suffered a breakdown in the early 2000s and subsequently moved to Asia.[9] After several years, he remerged as a figure on the political right, becoming a founding thinker in the neo-reactionary movement known as the Dark Enlightenment. His related writings have explored anti-egalitarian and anti-democratic ideas.

Biography

Land obtained a PhD in 1987 in the University of Essex under David Farrell Krell, with a thesis on Heidegger's 1953 essay *Die Sprache im Gedicht*, which is about Georg Trakl's work.[10] He began as a lecturer in Continental philosophy at the University of Warwick from 1987 until his resignation in 1998.[5] In 1992, he published *The Thirst for Annihilation: Georges Bataille and Virulent Nihilism*.[11] Land published an abundance of shorter texts, many in the 1990s during his time with the CCRU.[6] The majority of these articles were compiled in the retrospective collection *Fanged Noumena*, published in 2011.

At Warwick, Land and Sadie Plant co-founded the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU), an interdisciplinary research group described by philosopher Graham Harman as "a diverse group of thinkers who experimented in conceptual production by welding together a wide variety of sources:

futurism, technoscience, philosophy, mysticism, numerology, complexity theory, and science fiction, among others".[12] During his time at Warwick, Land participated in Virtual Futures, a series of cyber-culture conferences. Virtual Futures 96 was advertised as "an anti-disciplinary event" and "a conference in the post-humanities". One session involved Nick Land "lying on the ground, croaking into a mic", recalls Robin Mackay, while Mackay played jungle records in the background."[9] He was also the thesis advisor of some PhD students.[13] Following his resignation, the CCRU continued meeting under his leadership. In the early 2000s, Land suffered a breakdown after a period of "fanatical" amphetamine abuse.[9]

Land taught at the New Centre for Research & Practice until March 2017, when the Centre ended its relationship with him "following several tweets by Land this year in which he espoused intolerant opinions about Muslims and immigrants".[14]

As of 2017, Land resided in Shanghai.[15]

Concepts and influence

Early work

Land's work with CCRU, as well as his pre-Dark Enlightenment writings, have all been influential to the political philosophy of accelerationism, an idea resembling that of the "fatal strategy" of "ecstasy" in the earlier work of Jean Baudrillard, where "a system is abolished only by pushing it into hyperlogic, by forcing it into an excessive practice which is equivalent to a brutal amortization." Along with the other members of CCRU, Land wove together ideas from the occult, cybernetics, science fiction, and poststructuralist philosophy to try to describe the phenomena of techno-capitalist acceleration.

Land coined the term "hyperstition", a portmanteau of "superstition" and "hyper", to describe something which "is equipoised between fiction and technology". According to Land, hyperstitions are ideas that, by their very existence as ideas, bring about their own reality.[16][17]

Later work

Land's Dark Enlightenment philosophy (also known as neo-reactionary movement and abbreviated NRx) opposes egalitarianism. According to reporter Dylan Matthews, Land believes democracy restricts accountability and freedom.[18] Shuja Haider notes, "His sequence of essays setting out its principles have become the foundation of the NRx canon."[17]

His writing has variously discussed themes of scientific racism and eugenics, or what he briefly called "hyper-racism".[19][20][21][22] Land's current version of accelerationism incorporates explicitly racist views; since late 2016, he has increasingly been recognised as an inspiration for the alt-right.[23]

Land disputes that the NRx is a movement, and defines the alt-right as distinct from the NRx.[24]

Reception and influence

Mark Fisher, a British cultural theorist and student of Land's, argued in 2011 that Land's greatest impact so far had been on music and art, rather than on philosophy. The musician Kode9, the artist Jake Chapman, and others studied with or describe their influence by Land, often highlighting Land's inhuman, "technilist", or "delirious" qualities. Fisher underscores in particular how Land's personality during the 1990s could catalyze changes in those engaging with his work through what Kodwo Eshun describes as a manner "immediately open, egalitarian, and absolutely unaffected by academic protocol" which could dramatise "theory as a geopolitico-historical epic".[6]

Nihilist philosopher Ray Brassier, also formerly from the University of Warwick, stated in 2017 that "Nick Land has gone from arguing 'Politics is dead', 20 years ago, to this completely old-fashioned, standard reactionary stuff."[25]

Books

- *Heidegger's 'Die Sprache im Gedicht' and the Cultivation of the Grapheme (https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.379384) Archived (https://web.archive.org/web/20201031023447/https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.379384) 31 October 2020 at the Wayback Machine* (PhD Thesis, University of Essex, 1987)
- *The Thirst For Annihilation: Georges Bataille and Virulent Nihilism (An Essay in Atheistic Religion) (https://books.google.com/books?id=ts7ixS9roP0C)* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992)
- *Machinic Postmodernism: Complexity, Technics and Regulation (https://books.google.com/books?id=GBTvkQEACAAJ)* (with Keith Ansell-Pearson & Joseph A. McCahery) (SAGE Publications, 1996)
- *The Shanghai World Expo Guide 2010* (China Intercontinental Press, 2010)
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- Land, Nick (2011). Mackay, Robin; Brassier, Ray (eds.). *Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings 1987-2007*. London: Urbanomic. ISBN 978-0955308789.
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- *Phyl-Undhu: Abstract Horror, Exterminator* (Time Spiral Press, 2014)
- *Shanghai Times* (Urbanatomy Electronic, 2014) ASIN B00IGKZPBA (https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00IGKZPBA).
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- *Xinjiang Horizons* (Urbanatomy Electronic, 2014) ASIN B00JNDHDVY (https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00JNDHDVY).
- *Chasm* (Time Spiral Press, 2015) ASIN B019HBZ2Q4 (https://www.amazon.com/dp/B019HBZ2Q4).
- *The Dark Enlightenment* (Imperium Press, 2022) ISBN 978-1922602688
- *Xenosystems* (Passage Publishing, 2024) ASIN B0D8MNTVHY (https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0D8MNTVHY)

- *Urban Future* (Noumena Institute, 2025) ISBN 978-1922602688
- *Outsideness: 2013–2023* (Noumena Institute, 2025) ISBN 978-0646712703

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External links

- Outsideness Newsletter (https://zerophilosophy.substack.com) (Land's Substack newsletter)
- Outside In (https://web.archive.org/web/20200810122512/https://xenosystems.net/) (Land's Dark Enlightenment blog, archived from the original (https://www.xenosystems.net) on 2020-08-10)
- Urban Future (2.1) (https://web.archive.org/web/20200810120043/https://www.uf-blog.net/) (Land's accelerationism blog, archived from the original (https://www.uf-blog.net) on 2020-08-10)
- @xenocosmography (https://x.com/xenocosmography) (Land's Twitter account)

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